

AVON AND SOMERSET POLICE AND CRIME PANEL ANNUAL REPORT

This is the first report of the activities of the Avon and
Somerset Police and Crime Panel since it was established in
November 2012

*November 2012 -
June 2014*

This is the first report of the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel. The Panel is made up of councillors and independent members. The Chairman is Councillor Nigel Ashton from North Somerset Council and the Vice Chairman Councillor Francine Haeberling from Bath and North East Somerset Council. Police and Crime Panels were established in November 2012 and this report covers the Panel's first 18 months. We hope it will give you a good idea of who we are, what we do, and how we do it.

If you want to know more, our contact details and web site address are given at the end.

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What is Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel?

Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel came into being in November 2012, at the same time as elections for Police and Crime Commissioners were held across the country. Both were part of the new police governance arrangements whereby Commissioners and Panels replaced the old Police Authority and took over respectively its governance and scrutiny functions under the Police and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

Police and Crime Panels are in effect joint scrutiny bodies of the local authorities in the police force area and are mainly composed of elected members from these authorities. All panels also have the right to co-opt independent members who are not local councillors. The upper membership limit is 20. Councillor membership of a Police and Crime Panel must be geographically and politically proportionate.

Panel Membership

In Avon and Somerset the number of members from each authority and each political party was agreed by council leaders as follows:

- 2 members each from unitary authorities
- 1 member from each of the 2-tier authorities
- The Bristol mayor or his nominated representative
- 3 Independent members

Current Panel members are:

North Somerset Council:	Cllrs. Nigel Ashton and Roz Willis
Somerset County Council:	Cllr. Richard Brown
West Somerset District Council:	Cllr. Stuart Dowding
Mendip District Council:	Cllr. John Parham
Bristol City Council:	Cllrs. Gary Hopkins, Jeff Lovell and Afzal Shah
Taunton Deane District Council:	Cllr. Jane Warmington
Sedgemoor District Council:	Cllr. John Swayne
South Somerset District Council: Bath and North East	Cllr. Tony Lock
Somerset Council:	Cllrs. Lisa Brett and Francine Haeberling
South Gloucestershire Council:	Cllrs. Mike Drew and Heather Goddard
Independent Members:	Rosa Hui, Roger Kinsman, Andy Sharman

The following have also been members:

Cllr. William Wallace (Somerset) to June 2013
Cllr. Mark Edwards (Taunton Deane)
Cllr. Justin Howells (South Gloucestershire) to March 2014
Cllr. Pete Levy (Bristol) to Oct 2013
Cllr. Jeff Lovell (Bristol) to June 2013

Cllr. Hibaq Jama (Bristol) June 2013 – March 2014
Cllr. Peter Hammond (Bristol) June 2013 – Dec 2013
Brenda Steel (independent member) to Sept. 2013

Panel Role and Responsibilities

The relative roles of the Police and Crime Panel and the Police and Crime Commissioners are as follows:

- The Police Commissioner provides strategic governance to the area police force and holds the Chief Constable to account

- The Police and Crime Panel scrutinises the decisions and policy making and the performance of the Commissioner, on behalf of local authorities in the area and the general public.

The Panel's primary role is to scrutinise the way the Police Commissioner exercises their statutory function of providing strategic direction in local policing.

Police and Crime Panels are often described as acting as a 'critical friend' – a supportive but independent voice seeking to investigate the PCC in the interests of recommending changes and improvements. The purpose of the Panel's recommendations is 'to add tangible value to the delivery of the Commissioner's policies across the force area', as well as to scrutinise her activities.

The Panel can require the Commissioner or her staff to attend Panel meetings. It can invite the Chief Constable or any other witness but can't require them to be there. The Panel should not scrutinise the Chief Constable or operational policing matters, and must maintain an awareness of the boundary between operational and strategic policing issues, which is not always easy.

One of the main challenges for all Panels in the inaugural year was to work out how to provide robust scrutiny whilst staying within its remit and avoiding duplicating research or consultation undertaken by the Commissioner or other scrutiny bodies. For example, in confirmatory hearings for a Chief Constable appointment, the Panel's role is to confirm that the candidate has both the professional competence and the personal independence to fulfil the role, without replicating the original selection process. The Panel has agreed working protocols with the Commissioner and with community safety partnerships via the Avon and Somerset Safer and Stronger Board, to address some of these issues.

The Panel's Core Programme

The Panel has some statutory scrutiny responsibilities which it must deliver and these constitute its core work programme:

- Review annually the Commissioner's proposed council tax precept, with powers to veto once
- Review annually the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan and her Annual Report
- Scrutinise the Commissioner's proposed appointment of a Chief Constable, with the power to veto once, and scrutinise the appointment of any deputy commissioner and the Commissioner's senior executive staff
- Consider non-criminal complaints against the Commissioner.
- In addition to the above, the Panel can engage on further scrutiny reviews on any topic relevant to its role

The Panel can also make reports and recommendations to the Commissioner over and above its core work programme, on any topic which falls within its remit, and it can carry out investigations as it sees fit into the Commissioner's decisions and delivery of her duties.

Apart from the two instances where the Panel has a veto (the level of the police precept and the appointment of a chief constable) it achieves its impact by influence, by examining reports and draft policy documents, questioning the Commissioner and/or external witnesses, and then making recommendations. These are communicated to the Commissioner in writing and are publicly recorded in the Panel's minutes.

In practice, the Panel has developed a strong working relationship with the Commissioner, a key feature of which is the opportunity to influence policy processes at an early stage, before policy documents are finalised: for example, two or three preparation sessions with the Commissioner's officers are held in the lead up to scrutiny of the Commissioner's police precept and budget, and members discussed an early draft of this year's Police and Crime Plan refresh.

All the above core responsibilities are undertaken by the Panel as a whole, including complaints against the Commissioner, although periodic dip-sampling of complaints is done by a sub-group.

Achievements November 2012 – May 2014

Avon and Somerset is one of the largest and most diverse police areas, including within its boundaries county, market and seaside towns, rural villages, agricultural and industrial complexes, a large conurbation, inner city neighbourhoods, tourist destinations and sparsely inhabited hill country. It spans 10 councils in total.

For its first year's work programme, the Panel decided to focus on:

- 1. Delivering its core responsibilities effectively**

this was a difficult year for all Panels. Once up and running in November 2012, they were almost immediately faced with scrutiny of budgets and police precepts, and in Avon and Somerset, with a high-profile confirmatory hearing for an incoming Chief Constable in January 2013, within the budget/precept scrutiny period, and closely followed by Police and Crime Plan scrutiny.

The Panel had been meeting in shadow form since July 2012, and with its full membership including independent co-opted members since October 2012, and had held an induction and training session. However, there had been little time for members to settle into their role before addressing these major responsibilities, and it is to the Panel's credit that their confirmatory hearing

for the new Chief Constable was recognised in the local media and nationally as well-conducted, and that Budget and Police and Crime Plan scrutiny were discharged effectively.

2. Developing a productive working relationship with the Police Commissioner and her staff.

The Panel recognises that its job is to hold the Commissioner to account, but also that scrutiny is most effective in the context of a good working relationship. It aims for a critical but supportive approach. The Panel holds a joint work planning session with the Commissioner at its annual business meeting in June. At this session, formal core reviews and preparation session for those reviews are timetabled in, and the Commissioner has an opportunity to identify any pieces of work where input from the Panel will add value.

The Panel receives a Commissioner's Update at each meeting, and these have been a key tool in enabling members to keep an overview of strategic direction, to monitor performance generally and implementation of the Police and Crime Plan priorities in particular, and to identify issues to question and explore on behalf of the public.

The Panel also receives a six-monthly report from the Chief Constable – this was generously offered by the Chief Constable and the Commissioner, as the Panel does not have the right to request the attendance of the Chief Constable.

3. In depth scrutiny of priorities

For 2012-13, the Panel decided introduce some proactive scrutiny work outside its core programme, by examining areas of particular interest within the Commissioner's priorities. These were chosen from suggestions by Panel members and by the Commissioner. The Panel has addressed these areas by appointing Panel lead members who are involved in work undertaken by the Commissioner, and who report back to the Panel when appropriate – either by providing a companion report to the Commissioner's or in the Members' Reports item which is on all agendas.

Panel leads are as follows:

- Victim Services Commissioning: Cllr. Lisa Brett (Bath and NE Somerset)
- Relationship with the voluntary sector: Cllr. Roz Willis (North Somerset)
- Business crime: Cllr. John Swayne (Sedgemoor)

Major Reviews

These are listed in the table below.

Please note: correspondence between the Panel and the Police Commissioner can be found on the Panel's website <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/council-and-democracy/avon-and-somerset-police-and-crime-panel>

This includes formal communication of the Panel's comments and recommendations on the Budget and Police and Crime Plan, and the Commissioner's response about how she has taken account of them.

The Panel also inquired into the following:

- The Commissioner's response to consultation on the privatisation of the Probation Service (6.2.13)
- Budget and running costs of the Commissioner's administrative office (6.2.13)
- The Commissioner's response to the draft Anti-Social Behaviour Bill

Panel Reviews and Outcomes		
Date	Review	Outcomes
27.10.12	Inaugural meeting	The Panel agreed its rules and working arrangements and membership
10.12.12	General business meeting	The Panel agreed its working relations arrangements with the Commissioner, including the complaints protocol
16.01.01	Appointment of Chief Constable Confirmatory hearing	The Panel unanimously endorsed the Commissioner's decision to appoint Nick Gargan as Chief Constable Avon and Somerset Police
06.02.13	Police Precept	The majority decision of the Panel was not to accept the Commissioner's proposal to freeze the Precept for a further year, although the majority was not sufficient to veto

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15.03.13	Police and Crime Plan	A range of recommendations were made on the following issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation data • Basic policing data • Issues not considered a priority • Reduction of ASB • Developing good relationship with community leaders • Wording of domestic violence section • IT crime • Street Pastors • Hate crime • Collaborative approaches • Contact information for key PCC and constabulary staff • Reducing reoffending • Visual accessibility of Police and Crime Plan
05.06.13	Commissioner's Annual report	The report was reviewed and approved, with discussion of the Commissioner's stated priorities
24.10.13	Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan priorities	The Panel monitored progress
	Crime Needs Assessment	
11.12.13	Integrated Victims' Strategy/ victim support services commissioning	The Panel reviewed work so far on the integrated victims' strategy
	Precept and budget preparation	The Commissioner's proposed precept increase was approved in principle
05.02.14	Formal scrutiny of the Commissioner's police precept and budget	The Commissioner's proposed precept increase was formally approved
21.03.14	Refresh of Police and Crime Plan	

Complaints against the Commissioner

The Panel is responsible for handling non-criminal complaints against the Commissioner and criminal complaints and conduct matters that are referred back to the Panel by the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC). Arrangements for the Panel's role in complaints handling are set out in the Elected Local Policing Bodies (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2012 and accompanying Home Office Guidance.

The Panel has agreed to delegate responsibility for initial handling and recording functions to the OPCC Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer. The OPCC Chief Executive maintains records of all complaints which are available for inspection by the Panel. There is also a standing report on all complaints to each meeting of the Panel. More detailed information on complaints handling can be found in the Panel's Complaints Protocol.

Public Involvement in the Police and Crime Panel

Information about the Panel

Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel has a web pages at

<http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/council-and-democracy/avon-and-somerset-police-and-crime-panel>

Its meeting dates agendas and minutes can be found on Bristol City Council's website, via the Meeting Finder pages. The papers for each meeting include the Panel's work

programme https://www.bristol.gov.uk/CommitteeMeetingFinder?year=2014&cmcode=OT048&Task=list_name#openitem

There is also a link on the Panel's website above.

If you want any further information about the Panel or wish to email it for any other reason, you can do so by emailing pccpanel@bristol.gov.uk or writing to us c/o Democratic Services, Bristol City Council, City Hall, College Green, BRISTOL BS1 5TR.

Panel Contact Details

Council	Panel Representative (s)	Contact Details
North Somerset Council	Councillor Nigel Ashton (Panel Chairman)	www.nigelashton.co.uk

	Councillor Roz Willis	01934 416915
Somerset Council	Councillor Richard Brown	rjbrown@somerset.gov.uk
West Somerset District Council	Councillor Stuart Dowding	sdowding@westsomerset.gov.uk 01984 656764
Mendip District Council	Councillor John Parham	John_parham@btconnect.com 07958 133415
Bristol City Council	Councillor Gary Hopkins	Gary.hopkins@bristol.gov.uk
	Councillor Jeff Lovell	Jeffrey.lovell@bristol.gov.uk 07825 315734
	Councillor Afzal Shah	Afzal.shah@bristol.gov.uk 0777 5026384
Taunton Deane District Council	Councillor Jane Warmington	Cllr.j.warmington@tauntondeane.gov.uk 07790 652191
Sedgemoor District Council	Councillor John Swayne	John.swayne@sedgemoor.gov.uk
South Somerset District Council	Councillor Tony Lock	tony.lock@southsomerset.gov.uk 01935 700061
Bath and North East Somerset Council	Councillor Lisa Brett	lisa_brett@bathnes.gov.uk
	Councillor Francine Haeberling (Vice Chairman)	Francine_haeberling@bathnes.gov.uk 01225 872199
South Gloucestershire Council	Councillor Mike Drew	Mike.drew@southglos.gov.uk 07966228864
	Councillor Heather Goddard	Heather.goddard@southglos.gov.uk 01454 864063
Independent Members	Rosa Hui	0117 935 1462
	Roger Kinsman	kinsrog@inbox.com 07817132391
	Andy Sharman	swbac@hatchers.net

Attending Panel meetings

All Panel meetings are open the public – dates are on the Bristol City Council Meetings Finder web pages, address above. Meetings generally take place at North Somerset Council Council’s offices at Castlewood, Clevedon, but it’s advisable to check the venue if you wish to attend.

Public Forum

At each Panel meeting there is a Public Forum slot at the beginning of the agenda. This is for members of the public to make statements to or ask questions of the Panel on any matter which is within the function and responsibilities of the Panel

Each question or statement is allowed a maximum of 3 minutes – this can be extended or decreased by the Chair depending on the volume of public forum statements, and the whole Public Forum slot cannot take more than 30 minutes.

Public Forum statements must be received by Bristol City Council no later than 12.00 noon on the working day before the Panel's meeting.

Public Forum questions must be received by Bristol City Council no later than 5 clear working days before the meeting, in order to give time for an answer to be formulated. Questions are limited to 2 per person/ organisation.

Responses to questions may be oral or in writing. A questioner will be entitled to ask one supplementary question per question submitted after receiving a response.

Public Forum statements and questions should be marked for the attention of Pat Jones and sent to:

Email: democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk

Postal: Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel, c/o The Democratic Services Team, Room 220, City Hall, College Green, Bristol BS1 5TR, and marked for the attention of Ian Hird.

Independent Co-opted Panel Members

Members of the public with relevant skills and experience may also apply to be an independent co-optee member of the Panel. The Panel has three positions for independent members who are not local authority councillors. These are currently filled, but if posts fall vacant, the Panel will hold a recruitment campaign which will be advertised on its own and local authority websites and in the press and media.